

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XV. "AMOUR FAIT BEAUCOUP, MAIS ARGENT FAIT TOUT—"

POOR little Ida, drenched, bedraggled, bespattered, a beggar-maid, standing heart-sick in the hall of The Keep; and this superb beauty standing in that hall seven years later, in queenly apparel and receiving queenly homage from those to whom all others paid homage—the serene highnesses of the county; is the same person and recognisably the same. The face does not seem to have grown a day older, nor has the heart which looks still through the same set sad eyes. To-night there is a great ball at The Keep and in the intervals of the dance the cool hall is crowded. Ida receives there the triple homage of the daughter of the house (by adoption), of a belle, and of an heiress. Rumour gives her four thousand pounds a year on the death of the fast-failing Mr. Tuck; and therefore rumour gives her also the title of the belle, not of the county only, but of the country. It was confidently said if she had come out in town, or would spend a single season there, she would command a higher rent from a photographer than any professional beauty. Yet anyone who could look at Ida without seeing (if such a thing be conceivable) the ineffable loveliness of four thousand pounds a year in her face would still pronounce her superbly handsome, though he might, perhaps, think her beauty—her lustrous eyes notwithstanding—of too cold and statuesque a type. Rumour, indeed, had it that she was icy cold, haughty, and heartless; and that she held her hand poised like an auctioneer's hammer, waiting with a passionless neutrality to

let it fall at the nod of the highest bidder. She had refused already, it was said, two regiments, a dozen parishes, and half-a-dozen estates; but here rumour did injustice to the officers, clergy, and country gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and to Ida herself most of all. She was the last girl in the world to encourage wholesale and hopeless advances. In truth it was Ida's very humility, and warmth, and wealth of heart that got her the name of being haughty and heartless. Hearing everyone every day, and Mrs. Tuck most of all, talk of the brilliant match she ought to make with her prospects, she had come to regard her prospects as everything, and herself as nothing, in the world's eyes and in those of her suitors to be. And besides this motive for chilling and checking the first advances of such suitors, there was another which may seem well-nigh incredible to the reader. It will be remembered with what coldness her heart, preoccupied with grief, accepted Archie's boyish proposal. Nevertheless, afterwards, the idea of it and of all the boy's generous goodness to her in her desolation "did sweetly creep into her imagination," and she treasured his image as that of a suitor who loved her when she was but a beggar-maid—the only suitor of whom she could feel sure that he had loved her for herself alone. True, Archie was little more than a child at the time, but Ida at the time was a good deal more than a child—was almost a woman in all but years. And at the time her heart, harrowed up by sorrow and softened with the rain of tears, was best prepared for the seed which had fallen into it. One thing more—the soil into which it dropped was suited only for a few plants of deep and slow growth. "He that hath many friends hath none," says Aristotle, and Ida's friendships, fit and few, were fast and for life.

If then, six months before the period at which we have now arrived, Archie had claimed her old promise "to marry him, when he became a man, if he asked her," he would certainly not have met with a decided refusal. He had then the chance to ask her. They met most unexpectedly at the house of a common friend, and stayed together for a week under the same roof. And the effect of the meeting upon Ida, if we may betray her maiden thoughts, was electrical. He seemed to her all, and more than all, she had pictured him in her imagination. She never forgot the first meeting with him after all those years of dreaming upon him.

Sitting in my window
 Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god,
 I thought (but it was you), enter those gates;
 My blood flew out and back again, as fast
 As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
 Like breath; then was I called away in haste
 To entertain you: Never was a man
 Thrust from a sheepcote to a sceptre, raised
 So high in thoughts as I. You left a kiss
 Upon these lips then, which I mean to keep
 From you for ever. I did hear you talk
 Far above singing!

But if Ida felt, or rather because she felt, at this meeting all that is expressed in this exquisite passage, she studiously, too studiously, concealed the feeling.

I find she loves him much, because she hides it—
 Love teaches cunning even to innocence;
 And, when he gets possession, his first work
 Is to dig deep within a heart, and there
 Lie hid, and like a miser in the dark,
 To feast alone.

Now Archie also had his prepossessions about Ida, and judged her thereby. He had heard—it was the universal rumour about the heiress—that she was haughty and heartless, and he seemed to find her so. The remembrance of his boyish proposal and of her promise, the consciousness that years had deepened her regard for him and the fear that they had effaced his regard for her, and, lastly and chiefly, love itself, made our reserved heroine more shy and distant than ever. Thus Archie, though he too felt his love for her, which had never died out, revive and glow, yet proudly kept the distance at which her pride seemed to keep him. Besides, there is this thing to be remembered about the youth, that, whether in love or friendship, he must be giver, not receiver, benefactor not beneficiary. A girl must have many and immense merits to counterbalance in his eyes the possession of four thousand pounds a year—an inconceivable state of mind to those who forget that he was very young and that he was the son of a spendthrift. Thus this meeting, of which Mrs. John had heard

with such hope of the furtherance of her cherished scheme, seemed to upset it altogether.

Yet let this be noted, that, as the preciousness of all mortal things is due to their scarcity, and of all mortal achievements and attainments to their difficulty, Ida and Archie henceforth thought more of each other's love than if they had known that it was to have been had for the asking.

But all this time we have left Ida standing in the hall. She is little likely to miss us with that crowd of worshippers around her, and among them two very high bidders—Lord Ellerdale and Mr. George Seville-Sutton, representing respectively the highest title and the largest property in the neighbourhood. It was delightful to hear Mrs. Tuck hesitate between these two. She would, so to speak, first try one and then the other (like a serviceable stuff dress and a showy silk one) on Ida, and consider with her head on one side which became her best. It was no more use for Ida than for M. Jourdain to protest that the clothes didn't fit. The conversation then took the precise turn of that in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*:

M. Jourdain: "Vous m'avais aussi fait faire des soulières qui me blessent furieusement."

Tailleur: "Point du tout, monsieur."

M. Jourdain: "Comment point du tout?"

Tailleur: "Non, ils ne vous blessent point."

M. Jourdain: "Je vous dis qu'ils me blessent, moi."

Tailleur: "Vous vous imaginez cela."

And Mrs. Tuck also fell back invariably on the triumphant argument of the tailor—that it was not likely that she, who had been fitting folk (or match-making) all her life, should not know best whether the shoe pinched Ida or not. Nevertheless Ida, with the headstrong dogmatism of youth, maintained that neither of these gentlemen suited her. Lord Ellerdale could talk of nothing but shooting, and Mr. Seville-Sutton could talk of nothing at all. But, of the two, Ida held his lordship to be the least insufferable. Mr. Seville-Sutton was the merest automaton of propriety. He seemed to regard himself—as concerns this matter of perfect gentlemanly propriety—something in the light of a great town-hall clock, from which all the little watches of the countryside were to take their time. Therefore it behoved him to be always right to the second. Hence he was

"tedious as a king"—all ceremony—and to-night he "bestowed all his tediousness" on Ida.

He now leads her from the hall for the next dance, a waltz, which he dances most majestically in the short and few intervals between collisions; for as the little watches present do not take their time from him, Ida is knocked about like a billiard-ball, and is glad at last to be shot into a corner as into a pocket. Here Mr. Seville-Sutton apologises for the awkwardness of the others. If he jostled a planet he would feel aggrieved by its trespass on his orbit. Having said a severe something about "bad form," he asked for the third time to-night after Mr. Tuck's health. Mr. Tuck, by the way, never now puts in an appearance on these festive occasions. He retires to a distant wing of The Keep, to a chamber "deaf to noise and blind to light," and is there coddled at intervals by Mrs. Tuck. Ida for the third time replies that "Mr. Tuck is not so well, thank you," and Mr. Seville-Sutton, encouraged by the hope of the immediate possession of four thousand pounds a year, and flurried by the fear of Lord Ellerdale anticipating him, tries for the third time to make up his mind to propose to her. He had, 'tis true, some doubts about the propriety of proposing for her in her own house, but, after all, only a refusal would have made this awkward, and the refusal of Mr. George Seville-Sutton was a contingency not worth taking into calculation.

"There is a map of Mr. Tuck's property, Miss Luard, which I am anxious to see and which Mr. Tuck was so good as to say I might see on my next visit to The Keep. Do you think I might take the liberty of glancing at it to-night? Only a little matter of boundaries between his property and mine that I wished to look into," with a slight shrug expressive of the infinitesimal importance of a square mile or two, more or less, of land to him.

In truth, Mr. Seville-Sutton made this request with the object of getting Ida to himself in the library, where the map was, and where the sight of the broad acres marked on it might decide him to propose. For Mr. Seville-Sutton, though a young man, was, as most men are, avaricious in proportion to his riches. Ida led the way to the library, without the least suspicion of what might be in store for her. This question of the boundaries between the two estates had of late been the one burden of Mr. Tuck's conversation, who dwelt

always with tedious iteration on any topic bearing upon his pecuniary interests. So Ida, thinking Mr. Seville-Sutton's request very natural and innocent, led the way to the library with a heart lightened by the hope that she might rid herself then of a portentous bore.

She soon found the map, and spread it on a table in a recess between two book-cases. "Yes, this is it, Mr. Seville-Sutton," she said, and turned to go.

Therefore Mr. Seville-Sutton had to make his mind up in a moment with what, for him, was headlong precipitation.

"Thank you—thank you. Pardon me. Pray don't go, Miss Luard—one moment."

These breathless sentences were as startling from him as the sudden shying of a hearse-horse; but soon recovering himself, he fell back into his proper processional pace.

"Miss Luard," he said, with the imposing air of a bishop presenting a Sunday-school girl with a first prize; "Miss Luard, may I venture to hope that my attentions have not been—ah—unmarked, and have not been unwelcome to you?" Here, before Ida could recover herself, he advanced a step from the recess, to be ready at the proper moment to take her hand. "I have long been hoping for this opportunity to offer you my hand and to ask for yours."

Here was the cue for taking her hand, but, just as he took it, he dropped it at the sound of a quick foot at the door, and stepped back instinctively into the recess.

It was Lord Ellerdale, to whom Ida was engaged for the next dance.

"Oh, Miss Luard, here you are! I've been looking all over the place for you. Booked to me, you know, for this galop. I believe you hid here to shirk me. Now didn't you—eh?"

"Indeed no; I was just coming out."

Ida, as she said this, looked, as she well might, confused and embarrassed, and this confusion and embarrassment suggested a bright idea to his lordship, who was not without the vanity of youth, blown into full bloom by the flatterers of his rank. He had been told often enough that Ida was his for the asking, and he had too good an opinion of himself and of her to doubt it.

Her conscious and confused manner, therefore, suggested to him the bright idea that she had hid herself here with a view to a tête-à-tête with him when he sought

her out for the dance. Else, why should she be, just then, alone in the library, of all places?

Now, Ida had looked lovely all the evening, and she was looking most lovely of all at this moment; and though her charms might not have turned the scale which her fortune had already weighted even, her appreciation of his charms, expressed through these tell-tale and becoming blushes, did.

Why not propose now? He would never get a better chance, or find himself and her in a better mood.

"No, you needn't come. I'll give up the galop if you'll give me something else instead. Miss Luard—Ida—you know what that is," taking the hand his rival had just dropped.

Here's a situation for you! Two proposals in two minutes by two rivals within two paces of each other!

But before Ida could think of the most delicate way of rejecting one suitor within earshot of another, Mrs. Tuck came to the rescue, calling out "Ida," as she made for the library to look for her.

Ida, thinking it best to intercept her before she entered to add to the complication, said hurriedly, in horrible confusion, "Mrs. Tuck wants me, my lord," and was gone.

Perhaps it was the best way out of it. Any way, Ida had not the presence of mind to think of a better.

His lordship waited until Mrs. Tuck must have been well out of his way, then he made for the door, but stopped half-way, arrested by the thought that it was just possible that Ida might return to accept him. He was sure she would accept him, but he was not at all sure that she was the kind of girl to return coolly to hear his proposal out.

Still, it was just possible, and he would wait a minute or two longer, if only to recover from his agitation. For his lordship's heart beat like a watch, and not with the stately clock-movement of Mr. Seville-Sutton's.

In case of the entrance of any other than Ida, he thought it best to account for his presence there by taking a book, and in looking for a book he found Mr. Seville-Sutton.

"Sutton!" he exclaimed, and then, seeing it all, as he thought, in a moment, he faltered, "Miss Luard has—has accepted you?"

Mr. Seville-Sutton had never in his life

been taken so aback; nevertheless, he was still able to say in his buckram manner, with an assenting bow:

"I had just proposed for her."

He almost believed that Ida had tacitly accepted him, and he fully believed that she would have explicitly accepted him but for Lord Ellerdale's untoward interruption. Still, he was glad to prevent, by that assenting bow, his rival's putting her constancy to the test of further pursuit by him. This keen competition put her hand at a premium in his eyes.

Lord Ellerdale grew white with rage, furious with himself, with Ida, and most of all with Mr. Seville-Sutton.

"Why hide there unless for eaves-dropping? I took you for a gentleman."

This to Mr. George Seville-Sutton! Hence that deadly duel, at which the county stood aghast—fought, not in Belgium, but at the hustings, whereby the great Conservative party was split in two, and a Radical soap-boiler from Birmingham was returned at the head of the poll! Unspeakable! But we do not aspire to deal with these high matters.

Lord Ellerdale, having shot the fiery dart which kindled this world-wasting conflagration, left the library and the house in deadly dudgeon. If he had waited five minutes, Mr. Seville-Sutton might have made a retort, but his vast mind moved slowly, and it was not until four months later that he resolved to shake society to its base by the practical retort of opposing Lord Ellerdale's re-election. For the present he would stay his thirst for revenge by making absolutely sure of Ida. This, however, was not so easy. He could not get her to himself again, and was fain to be content with pressing her hand in taking his leave, and promising, in a voice markedly subdued, to do himself the honour of calling upon her to-morrow.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Tuck was in a state of distraction at the sudden, rude, unaccountable disappearance of Lord Ellerdale. Where had he gone? Why had he gone? His lordship, of all people, the observed of all observers—who was to have taken her in to supper, too! It was disastrous. For Mrs. Tuck worshipped rank with more than Philistine fervour. For the rest of the evening, until the last guest had departed, she went adrift as a ship that has had its rudder wrenched away; driven hither and thither, and letting things go as they would—which was very unlike her, as she took pleasure in arranging

everything for everyone, from a waltz to a wedding.

Nor was she the less discomposed because she suspected the truth, or what was very near the truth—that Ida had refused his lordship, who had taken his refusal after the manner of a petted and petulant boy.

No sooner, then, were she and Ida left alone in the deserted banquet-hall than she approached the subject with the indirectness which had become an instinct with her. She was rather afraid of Ida, in the way in which talkative and insincere people are afraid of sincere and silent people. She regarded the girl as her creation, taking credit to herself, not only for her prospects, but for her "style," and almost for her beauty; yet she stood in a kind of awe of her, and was never so insincere with her, or with others in her presence, as was her wont.

Ida, on her side, did not see through Mrs. Tuck at all, as that good lady feared. Her cold, undemonstrative, and seemingly critical manner was mere manner, and really hid a warmth and depth of heart, and especially of affection for Mrs. Tuck, which the latter hardly suspected. A year since, indeed, when Mrs. Tuck was dangerously ill for six weeks, Ida had the chance, of which she made the most, of expressing her love and gratitude. She would allow no one else to nurse the patient, and no one else could have nursed her with such tender and untiring devotion. In fact, she nursed Mrs. Tuck as she had been used to nurse her mother, and as a mother would nurse her sick child, with an utter self-forgetfulness, and in a soothing, coaxing, petting way that might have moved Mrs. Tuck to laughter if it had not moved her to tears. For the kind-hearted woman was immensely surprised and touched by the motherly devotion of the girl; and this devotion made an important practical change in Mrs. Tuck's plans—a change which we are in order in mentioning here. She had meant the heiress for one of her own needy kindred—a gentleman who, in her opinion, had all the virtues except that of a fortune or of a title. But with Mrs. Tuck a fortune or a title outweighed all other virtues, and with these, therefore, Ida was to be rewarded for her devotion to her benefactress in her illness, and the needy Admirable Crichton was sacrificed with a sigh. It is true Mrs. Tuck thought something of her own interests in the matter, of the reflected glory she would enjoy from such an alliance; but

she was thinking most of Ida's apotheosis. "Sic itur ad astra." Nevertheless, here was the infatuated girl turning her back upon the path of glory.

"I think everything went well, Ida," making for her object as a hawk for its quarry, by wheeling round above it in narrowing circles before it drops upon it.

"Yes," said Ida absently.

"I couldn't get partners for everybody, you know," in a querulously defensive tone, as though Ida were complaining of her neglect of duty in this respect. "There was that Miss Pratt, no one would dance with her a second time or a second round. Lord Ellerdale said she was 'too hard in the mouth.' He didn't find you 'hard in the mouth,' my dear. He danced with you often enough."

Ida was still silent, but not now absent. She looked encouragingly conscious.

"I think he enjoyed himself while he stayed, though he didn't stay long. Had he another engagement?"

"No—I don't know," stammered Ida.

"But didn't he make any excuse for going so soon when he bid you good-night, Ida?"

"He didn't bid me good-night."

"No? Most extraordinary! I thought I might have been out of the way, attending to my poor dear husband, and that he must have made his excuses to you. Did he say nothing to you, dear, before he went?"

Ida was still silent. She felt it to be her duty to tell the whole affair to Mrs. Tuck, but at the same time she had to struggle at once against her natural reserve, and against a sense that she had no right to part with a secret in which others had a greater share than herself.

"My dear," resumed Mrs. Tuck, reading the girl's distressed face—"my dear, I don't want to pry into your secrets—it isn't as if I were your mother, or had any claim on you, though I can't help feeling like a mother towards you."

This was the right chord, as Mrs. Tuck well knew.

"You've been a mother to me, Mrs. Tuck, and there are no secrets of my own that I would keep from you; but there are others—not that you would mention it again."

"Is it likely?" burst in Mrs. Tuck, not angry, but grieved.

Well, it was likely, but Ida did not think so, and therefore she told the whole affair to the excited, amazed, amused, and disappointed Mrs. Tuck.

"He must have found the other there," exclaimed she after she had recovered her breath.

"I'm afraid so."

"I should like to have seen the Don's face."

"The Don" was Mrs. Tuck's nickname for Mr. Seville-Sutton, though she had never before used it to Ida. Now it slipped out naturally and almost necessarily, as Mrs. Tuck tried to picture the Don discomposed—a feat not possible even to her lively imagination.

"Dear! he must have looked like an owl at a fire. But which were you going to accept, Ida?" recalling her riotous imagination with an effort to the serious side of the business; "Mr. Seville-Sutton?"

"I don't care in the least for him," with a shudder, whether caused by a chill after dancing, or by the presentation to her mind's eye of this icy suitor.

Mrs. Tuck rose to put a shawl round the girl's shoulders, saying, as she did so:

"You're so warm, child, you'll catch cold if you don't mind," and then, as she resumed her seat, she added the moral: "Love is like that, my dear; if you begin too warm, you're sure to catch cold afterwards. If I'd been as passionately in love with my poor dear husband as you girls think you ought to be, we should never have been as happy together as we have been—never. But I didn't let my feelings run away with me—I let him," she added with a laugh, the pun being irresistible.

"Did Mr. Tuck run away with you?" cried Ida, amazed, as well she might be. The idea of Mr. Tuck's so far forgetting himself—in all senses of the phrase—was not conceivable.

"He couldn't run away," said Mrs. Tuck, with unintentional truth, for in this, indeed, lay the secret of their union; "he was laid up at the time with a sprained ankle, but he persuaded me into a private marriage, my dear, and we've been very happy together."

"But he didn't marry you for your fortune?"

"Indeed then, my dear, he did not, for there was little of that same to fall in love with. Not that he'd have liked me the less," she continued, seeing the drift of the girl's thoughts, "if I had brought him a few thousand pounds. It's a fine thing for a girl, Ida, to owe the man she marries nothing."

"Not love even?"

"She doesn't owe that if she gives as much as she gets."

"No, not if there's no love lost between them," said Ida with some bitterness, "Mr. Seville-Sutton and I would be quits."

"Now, Ida, you know as well as I that neither Mr. Seville-Sutton or Lord Ellerdale would marry you merely for your prospects. Do you think either of them would marry Miss Pratt if she had three or four thousand pounds a year in prospect?"

"I know neither of them would think of me if I hadn't."

"I don't know that at all, my dear. I was watching Mr. Seville-Sutton this evening, when he thought no one was looking, and I'm sure the way he gazed at you——" leaving an eloquent aposiopesis which Ida filled in:

"Like an owl at a mouse," smiling as she used Mrs. Tuck's own description of Mr. Seville-Sutton. "Besides, if he did care for me I should owe him nothing, for I never could care for him."

Mrs. Tuck had learned to translate Ida's language into her own by changing every positive into a superlative and liberally supplying every bald sentence with intensive verbs, adverbs, and prepositions. Ida's protesting, "I never could care for him," was equivalent to most girls protesting, "I cannot endure him." So she fitted the other string to her bow.

"Well, my dear, there's Lord Ellerdale."

"I don't think there is, Mrs. Tuck."

"Nonsense, my dear; when he finds you've refused Mr. Seville-Sutton—if you must refuse him—he'll come back fast enough. A girl with your prospects——"

"Oh dear, I wish I'd no prospects!" an outburst of profanity, which coming from so reserved a girl took Mrs. Tuck's breath away.

"My dear Ida!"

"Well, Mrs. Tuck, I mean I should like to be sure I was chosen for myself and not for my prospects. Besides, I don't care for Lord Ellerdale either. If I married him I shouldn't be happy, and I shouldn't make him happy. He'd find only a death's head in the golden casket."

Mrs. Tuck sat up for another half-hour to persuade the obstinate girl that this shoe at least did not pinch, and could not pinch, but fitted to perfection.

LEGENDS OF THE SYNAGOGUE.

AMONG the many superstitions of mediæval Judaism which survive in old-fashioned Jewish communities, one of the most inveterate is the belief that the

synagogue is a meeting-place for the dead as well as for the living. Your thoroughly orthodox and thoroughly conservative Jew—an individual common enough in Eastern Europe, and by no means so rare in England as many may imagine—is firmly convinced that the “shool,” as the house of worship is familiarly designated, is regularly frequented by the “meisim” or departed members of the congregation, who assemble there for the purpose of prayer and study, just as they did while alive. The notion, in all probability, dates from very ancient times, for a curious legend of the Medrash records how one of the rabbins of old tried to force his way into the cave of Macpelah—where the patriarchs are fabled to have had a synagogue of their own—but was stopped by Eliezer of Damascus, the steward of Abraham, who said his master was engaged in prayer, and could not, without danger, be disturbed. Be that, however, as it may, no orthodox Israelite under any circumstances ever enters or attempts to enter a synagogue, without giving three preliminary knocks at the door, in order to warn the dead of the approach of a living co-religionist, and thus afford them time to vanish ere anyone disturb them. Unlucky is he accounted who ventures to intrude without so doing; and thrice unlucky is he deemed, who should, peradventure, look with mortal eye upon the “meisim” or congregants from the grave.

This curious superstition has—as may be imagined—given rise to quite a crop of strange stories and weird legends. And, oddly enough, these are invariably connected with, or said to be connected with, certain practices of observant and orthodox Israelites. In Russia, Poland, and Galicia, for instance, no female ever enters a synagogue alone, and the gossips of the Juden-viertel, or Jewish quarter, explain the why and wherefore of this. They tell how, many, many years ago, the “Rabbetsen”—the chief rabbin’s wife, that is—of Sluzk, rose early one morning in autumn, and started for the synagogue before daybreak—as is the wont of all old-fashioned Jews—in order to attend the propitiatory services held during the week that intervenes between the new year and the Day of Atonement; how the wind blew out the candle in the lantern she carried; and how, on entering the synagogue, she was surprised to find the place lit up, and the men’s seats below filled with devout worshippers. And then, requiring a light,

she called to the attendant downstairs to bring her one; when, lo and behold! a hand was stretched up from beneath the gallery, a mysterious and ghostly hand, reaching forty feet up; and in this hand was the light for which she had asked. Two hours afterwards she was found by the living worshippers, who came later, insensible upon the floor. And to the end of her days, runs the tradition, she was blind, she who had inadvertently looked upon the dead. To this day, no Jewess enters a synagogue by herself. If alone when she reaches the “shool,” she remains outside until one of the male members of the congregation arrives. When he has passed in, then, and then alone, will she follow him into the sacred edifice.

Stranger even than the foregoing, is the legend of the Levite of Horoduo—a fantastic narrative carefully handed down from the middle ages. Late one dark winter’s night the Chief Rabbi of Horoduo had been sitting with his favourite pupil, young Eliah, the Levite, in the stuffy “Bes medrash,” or college adjoining the synagogue. It was time to cease study, and with many a blessing the disciple was dismissed. His way home lay past the house of prayer. As he went by, he noticed, with amazement, that the edifice was lighted up within. Instead of passing on with head averted, he went up close to the windows, as he should not have done, and peered in. The “shool” was full; cram full of worshippers, full of “meisim,” dead ones, congregants from the grave, all engaged in prayer. The reader’s platform was occupied by the precentor—just as among the living—and the Scroll of the Law was open on the reading-desk in front of him. As the Levite listened he heard the solemn monotone of the minister as he chaunted the portion of the week. Then, to his horror and astonishment, his own name was called, called to the reading of the Law, a summons no Jew dare disregard. Could he disobey the call? And yet, to enter at midnight alone among a congregation of the dead! He would consult his master. Rushing back to the college, he hastily recounted the circumstance to the rabbin. “Go in, my son,” was the advice of the teacher, “go in, and walk carefully along the aisle so that you touch none of the dead; ascend the platform, take your place by the reader’s side, recite the customary blessings, hear the portion for the Levite read, and then

depart carefully as before. But of one thing beware! Do not descend from the platform on the same side as you ascend. Go up by the stairs on the one hand, but go down by the steps on the other." Trembling with fear, the young man returned to the synagogue; trembling, he entered among the dead. Carefully he passed the "meisim" without touching them, ascended the reading-platform, recited the benediction, heard the portion of the Pentateuch read, repeated the second benediction, and then turned to descend. But, in his terror and haste, he forgot the master's injunctions. He went down on the same side as he ascended, and—fell dead upon the floor ere he reached the bottom. And to this day, just as it is customary to knock three times before entering a synagogue, out of regard for the dead who may be within, so is it customary never to look back into the house of prayer when leaving it, or passing by outside. An orthodox Israelite would no more look behind him when he has once passed the "shool" than glance back into a cemetery when coming from a funeral.

By far and away, though, the most remarkable of these curious "legends of the dead" is certainly that attaching to the Great Synagogue of Posen, one of the oldest synagogues in Northern Europe. It must first be explained that on the Day of Atonement—the most solemn of all holy days among the Jews—orthodox people are accustomed to wear, over their ordinary attire, their shrouds—the white linen garments in which they are some day to be buried. Further, it is the custom in all orthodox congregations throughout Europe for the worshippers who attend on this solemn occasion to cover their heads with their "talithim," or "praying-scarves," for with his head so covered, every Israelite, observant or not, is buried. Only in one synagogue do the members depart from this universal practice—in the "alt-shool" of Posen. Here this practice is prohibited. For upwards of three hundred years the worshippers have never covered their heads with their "talithim" as in other Jewish communities. And this is accounted for by the following legend:

In the last year of his rabbinate, the famed Rabbi Joseph the Godly, then Chief Rabbi of Posen, being old and infirm was led into the "alt-shool," or Old Synagogue, on the eve of the Day of Atonement. The hundreds of large wax candles, lit in memory of the dead, were ablaze, and the

congregation, all in snow-white shrouds, and with their "talithim" over their heads, rose as their chief entered. The reader took his place, and was just about to intone the opening prayer, "Kol-Nidre," when of a sudden he found that someone was standing by his side. Surprised, he looked round, and to his amazement discovered that the reading-platform, which should have been unoccupied, was tightly packed. Of a sudden, too, the worshippers became aware that they were being inconveniently crowded. They tried to turn, but in vain. There was no moving either to the right or to the left. Denser and denser grew the throng; the crush was intolerable, and it became almost impossible to breathe. Terrified, the congregation cried aloud to the rabbin, who, lifting his eyes from the prayer-book, upon which they had been intently fixed, gave one swift glance round, and saw that a multitude of dead—of "meisim"—were present, crowded there among the living, the dead also in their white grave-clothes, also with their praying-scarves over their heads, and therefore not to be distinguished from the living worshippers. High above the clamour of the people rose the voice of Rabbi Joseph. "Ye that are of the living, remove your talithim!" he exclaimed. In an instant this was done, and then were seen the dead, standing there among the living, and known by this, that their heads remained covered—for they dare not remove the "talith," or praying-scarf, in which they are enveloped when committed to the earth. "In the name of the Lord God of Israel," exclaimed the rabbin, "in the names of the Patriarchs, and in the names of your own ancestors, I adjure you to leave this house of prayer of the living, that we, who are alive, may worship unhindered here, even as you did in your times." Immediately the throng began to melt away, the crowd seemed to disperse, and in a few moments the synagogue was occupied only by its living congregants. In memory of this "terrible eve" of the Day of Atonement, the members of the Great Synagogue of Posen abstain to this very day from covering their heads with their praying-scarves on this solemn holiday.

Quite as strange in its way, as this notion about the assembling of the dead in the synagogues of the living, is the belief—to which the ultra-orthodox Jews of Eastern Europe cling with incredible tenacity—in the occult and necromantic powers of the "Baal-Shem," or "Masters of the Name,"

as they designate such rabbins as are popularly supposed to be acquainted with the "Ineffable Name" of the Creator, traditionally transmitted among the learned. This "sacred name," the "mystic name of ten letters," which King Solomon knew and had impressed upon his seal—and by virtue of which he was enabled to trap the Demon King Asmodeus, and bottle-up impudent djinns, and rebellious spirits—is held to confer upon its fortunate possessors the most formidable powers. They can raise the dead, face demons and sprites, and have command generally over disembodied souls. Of course, only Cabalists of profound learning and ascetic lives are supposed to be acquainted with the thaumaturgic name; and, as in the matter of the "meisim," this belief in the occult powers of the "Baal-Shem" has given rise to any number of marvellous stories carefully garnered by the "gossips of the Ghetto," and duly handed down from generation to generation. The Josephstadt of Prague—once the Judenstadt or Jewish quarter of the Bohemian capital—is a perfect storehouse of such curious legends, the most extraordinary of which are connected with the ancient synagogue there, the "Alt-neu Shool," and great mediæval rabbin, Rabbi Löw ben Bezaleel, some time Chief Rabbi of Prague, and everywhere known among his people as the "Hoch Rab Low," the "High Rabbi Löw."

The synagogue at Prague, the celebrated "Alt-neu" Synagogue, is, without exception, the oldest in Europe. It is said to have existed as it now stands in the tenth century, and there are tombstones in the Jewish cemetery dating back more than a thousand years. Its designation "alt-neu," or "old-new," synagogue, is peculiar, and local tradition affirms that it was so named because it was not built by the founders of the Prague community, but was discovered *in situ*, just as it now is. The legend, as popularly told, runs as follows:

Early in the tenth century a band of Israelites under the leadership of Rabbi Abraham, the "Baal-Shem," wandering through Bohemia, arrived at the site of what is now Prague. Here, they accidentally came across a Jewish cemetery, in which were a number of tombstones inscribed in Hebrew. Struck by the fact that their people must, at some time or other, have been settled in the vicinity, they resolved to locate themselves there, and so laid the foundation of the Joseph, or Judenstadt. One evening, but a short time after their

arrival, the Rabbi Abraham was sitting in the ancient Jewish cemetery. Immersed in thought, he had allowed the hour of evening prayer to pass. Hastily rising, he was about to leave the burial-ground when he found that someone was standing by his side, a man evidently in the white garments of the dead, his head enveloped in his praying-scarf. And then, too, the rabbin became aware that he was surrounded by such figures; the cemetery was full of them. As he looked, they began to move off, in slow, solemn procession, towards a hill in the distance. As the last of the white-robed figures was passing out through the ruined gateway, it turned, and, raising its hand, beckoned to the rabbin. Without an instant's hesitation he followed. The hill was soon reached, but as the shrouded shadows arrived at a certain rocky projection in the hill-side, they disappeared; seemingly melting away into the solid earth. Ere the last figure in the procession vanished, it again turned, and again beckoned to the rabbin to follow. But he could find no door, no passage, and no signs of any. Hurling himself then, with all his strength against the rocky ground, he pronounced aloud the "ineffable name"—of which he was a master—and instantly an opening showed itself. He entered, and discovered that he was in a narrow passage, at one extremity of which he detected the glimmer of a light. For this he made. A few steps, and he stood in the interior of an immense stone-built synagogue, of massive construction and noble proportions. A large iron chandelier hung from the roof, and the "perpetual light" in front of the ark burnt brightly. But the edifice was untenanted; not a soul, living or dead, was there. For a few moments the rabbin paused, bending reverently in prayer; then, retracing his steps, he traversed again the passage by which he had entered, and emerged into the open air. As he did so the hill-side closed behind him, leaving no trace of an opening. Returning to his brethren, the Rabbi Abraham suggested, in a few days, the building of a house of prayer on the hill-side adjoining the ancient Jewish cemetery. Under his superintendence, they began to dig the foundations at the very spot where he had seen the white-robed figures from the burial-ground disappear. In a short time the hidden passage was discovered by the workmen, and, ere many weeks were over, the ancient synagogue, new yet old, was disinterred from the

mound under which for centuries it had been buried. In this way, it came to be designated the Alt-neu Shool, the old-new synagogue—a designation by which it continues to be known throughout the length and breadth of orthodox Judaism.

But if—as this story sets forth—the Alt-neu Synagogue of Prague owes its discovery to one “Baal-Shem” of local fame, so, according to popular legend, was it brought perilously nigh destruction by reason of the imprudence—not to say carelessness—of another renowned cabalist and thaumaturg, the High Rabbi Löw before-mentioned.

Tradition has it that this Rabbi Löw was a cabalist of transcendent powers. He is said to have been taught the occult art by a certain Don Abraham, of Saragossa, who came twice a week from Spain to instruct his friend and disciple, and who contrived to do the trifling distance from the Ebro to the Moldan in about sixty seconds—by supernatural means, of course. Rabbi Löw’s indoctrination into “Practical Cabala” was more than ordinarily fruitful of results. Although his house—which is still in existence in the Breite Gasse—was of modest proportions and his income limited, he always found his guests and disciples a room as large as the great hall of the “Hradchin,” and provided meals for them on a most sumptuous scale. But, above all and everything, he was a necromancer of unparalleled powers, and, it would appear, of unparalleled audacity.

It so happened that the Emperor Rudolph was extremely well-disposed towards Rabbi Löw, and frequently invited him to the imperial residence. On one occasion the emperor requested the rabbin to give him a specimen of his necromantic powers, and no ordinary specimen either, since the monarch wished to see the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, as they lived and moved. Rabbi Löw at first demurred. The emperor, however, insisted, and finally the rabbin agreed to raise from the dead the twelve sons of Israel, but on one condition—whatever the emperor might see, whatever he might hear, no matter how strange, no matter how surprising, he was to remain silent, not a word, not an exclamation was to escape him.

At midnight emperor and rabbin stood together in the Alt-neu Synagogue in darkness and in silence. Rabbi Löw, his phylacteries bound upon his forehead and left arm, his praying-scarf over his head,

and the “Zohar,” or text-book of Cabala, in his hand, was in front of the ark. By his side stood the sovereign. A single word came from the lips of the rabbin, and suddenly the wall upon which they were both gazing seemed to melt away, and Rudolph saw before him a vast open space dimly illumined. As suddenly, four majestic figures, the figures of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, rose up as from the earth, and passed into the distance. As Judah moved away, he roared as with the voice of a lion, until the very walls shook. But the emperor remained unmoved. Then appeared four other sons of Jacob, Isaacher, whose tread shook the solid ground under foot, Zebulun and Benjamin, with a beauty “surpassing that of women,” and Dan, one-eyed and of gruesome aspect. Still the emperor was unmoved, and the silence remained unbroken. But then came Naphtali alone, and when Rudolph beheld him running—as rabbinical legend says he could run—over the top of the standing corn, so swiftly and so lightly that the stalks kept erect, and the swelling ears never even bent beneath his weight, he could not refrain from an exclamation of wonder. As the sound imprudently escaped his lips, a crash as of thunder resounded through the building, the ground under his feet opened as if to engulf him, and the wall in front began to bend inward, as though to fall upon and crush him. Quickly Rabbi Löw threw his arms round the emperor, and pronouncing the “ineffable name” of the Creator, succeeded in stilling the unnatural commotion, and saving his companion from destruction. But, with all his power, Rabbi Löw could not restore things precisely as they had been. The wall that had bent forward as though to crush them, remained so, bending and tottering. And there it may be seen to this very day, at the farther end of the Alt-neu Synagogue, bending and bulging in a very threatening manner, seemingly on the point of falling in, a standing memento of the Emperor Rudolph’s imprudence, and the daring necromantic experiment of the High Rabbi Löw.

But this was not the only occasion upon which the synagogue was endangered owing to the cabalistic pranks of Rabbi Löw. Inside the building, and to the left of the sanctuary, there is a pillar—one of some dozen that support the gallery and roof—cracked from top to bottom, riven as if by lightning, and sinking, apparently,

under the weight imposed upon it. For this half-broken and shaky column tradition holds Rabbi Löwe ben Bezaleel directly responsible. Legend has it that among his many magical possessions—and he had quite a variety—the most remarkable was the “golem,” an automaton figure, constructed or formed of clay, and to which he is said to have been able to impart life by simply placing under its tongue a “kemea,” or charm, which was an exact facsimile of the Shem Hamforesh, or “Sacred Name,” engraved on the seal of King Solomon. For many years this golem proved an invaluable servant. It appears, however, that one of the terms upon which Rabbi Löw was enabled to exercise supernatural power was the strict observance of the Sabbath. And hence it was his duty always to withdraw the kemea from the mouth of the golem before sunset on Friday. One Friday evening this duty escaped his memory, and he started for the synagogue without releasing his familiar. The golem immediately became alive and furious. It swelled to a gigantic size, stalked through the Ghetto, spreading death and devastation by its mere glance, and broke into the Alt-neu Synagogue. The service was just commencing, but fortunately the Sabbath had not been “made in.” The golem rushed towards the ark, grasping with its enormous hands the pillar on the left, as if to wrench it from its foundation and bring down roof and gallery upon the heads of the worshippers. Just then Rabbi Löw darted forward and wrested the kemea from beneath the tongue of the living automaton. The figure quivered for an instant, and then fell to the ground in a thousand atoms. But even as it loosened its grasp, the golem shook the column from capital to base, rending it from top to bottom, and leaving it cracked and broken as it now stands.

Most of the older synagogues of Europe are, it may be noted, the scenes of similar strange and fantastic stories. The Rhine districts — Mayence, Speyer, Worms, Bacharach—is especially rich in Jewish legends that survive from mediæval times. Many of these, too, are actually connected with portions of the Jewish ritual. The story of Rabbi Amnon, of Mayence, is a typical instance of this. On the New Year's Day, German Jews are accustomed to intone a very solemn prayer known as the “Unsané

tokéf,” from its commencing words, which read: “Let us dwell upon the sanctity of this day.” The prayer itself forms no part of the ancient Jewish ritual, and the Jews of Southern Europe are unacquainted with it. The Rhine legend ascribes its origin to Amnon, Chief Rabbi of Mayence, who flourished in the eleventh century. He enjoyed in a high degree the favour of the then Palatine Bishop of Mayence, and excited thereby the envy of the courtiers. To effect his ruin, they insidiously represented to the dignitary of the Church how desirable it was that, as a bishop, he should with the rite of baptism impart to his favourite the greatest blessing in his power. For a time the cleric avoided the snare laid for his Jewish friend. But certain hints about his zeal for the Church being called in question, induced him, at length, to send for Rabbi Amnon, and urge him to leave the faith of his fathers. The rabbin asked for three days to consider the matter. He had, however, no sooner quitted the presence of his patron, than he was overwhelmed with remorse at having hesitated, even for an instant; and he resolved, at any risk, to go no more to the episcopal palace. The third day came—the day upon which he was to answer the proposal. It was the New Year, and Rabbi Amnon, of course, attended the solemn service held in the synagogue. In the midst of prayers came a message from the bishop, requesting the rabbin's attendance. He refused to leave. Again came a message, more peremptory, and again the rabbin refused to obey. A third message came, and with it a file of soldiers to enforce obedience. Seizing the Jew, they bound him, and so carried him to the palace. Incensed at his stubborn resistance, the bishop ordered the rabbin's arms and legs to be lopped off; and thus mutilated, he was taken back to the synagogue. Here, wounded and bleeding, he requested to be laid in front of the sanctuary in which the Scrolls of the Law are deposited. The curtain was drawn on one side, and he was placed in the apse, where, in the pause that ensued, he, with his dying breath, commenced the prayer before-mentioned, which concludes with the words: “Penance, prayer, and alms avert the evil decree.” As he muttered the last sentence the curtain, it is said, was pulled across the apse by invisible hands; and when—the legend runs—the congregation rushed forward to see what had happened, Rabbi Amnon's body was

not to be found. It had disappeared, only a few blood-stains marking the spot where it had rested. The prayer he extemporised has ever since formed an integral portion of the ritual of the German Jews; and in the synagogue at Mayence—where Rabbi Amnon's seat is still shown—the curtain in front of the ark is drawn during the recitation of the words, just as on the occasion when the martyr rabbin with his dying breath is said to have first given utterance to them.

But there are more legends associated with portions of the Jewish ritual than the majority of Jews themselves wot of. Of the hundreds of thousands who annually read through the New Year's service, how few know that one of the prayers recited on that day is held to commemorate the fact of there having been a Jewish "Pope of Rome"—according to tradition he was burnt at the stake—while another has reference to the half-historic, half-legendary narrative, known as the "Dance to Death."

FORBIDDEN.

Oh, weary feet that on Life's stony ways
Must tread in separate paths; while Time's dark wings
Beat out the lagging hours of all the days,
Marking the epochs of their wandering!
Oh, lonely road! O tired, pacing feet
That may not meet!
Oh, longing hands that may not, must not, clasp
Those other loved ones in this world's wide night;
Oh, parted hands that may not, must not, grasp
Those other hands with yearnings infinite!
Oh, starving lips, whose hunger is but this—
They may not kiss.
Oh, aching eyes that shine so far apart,
Love-haunted eyes that may not, must not, tell
The secret of the passion-laden heart,
The whispered secret that they know so well!
Oh, hopeless love, that hope of death survives
In such cleft lives!
Oh, souls that never while the world rolls on
Shall mingle in a speechless ecstasy!
Oh, love that lives on hours long dead and gone—
Bound love that strives so vainly to be free!
Oh, joy of life that cometh all too late!
Oh, cruel fate!

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

DERBYSHIRE.

NEAR the junction of the rivers Swale and Trent, at a point where three counties meet, in the midst of fertile river-meadows, stands an important railway centre, which, for want of any village or hamlet near at hand to lend it a name, has assumed that of Trent Junction. In origin a settlement of railway-porters and refreshment-room

maids, this three-cornered morsel of railway territory has developed a good deal of activity round about. The osier-beds which gave the riverside village of Sawley its title, may still be traced, but the village has rapidly increased within the last few years, and wheel works and carriage-works have taken the place of the old basket-making industry. A few miles higher up the river a handsome bridge bears the name of Cavendish Bridge, after a former Duke of Devonshire—if territorial titles had any meaning, more properly Duke of Derbyshire. And this bridge, with the adjacent railway centre, may remind us that in the county we are now entering the influence of the great territorial house is rivalled by that of the Midland Railway Company, the one the growth of the present century, while the other dates from Elizabethan days, and traces the growth of its high fortunes to the genius and policy of Countess Bess of building memory.

Before the existence of Cavendish Bridge, or of the more modern railway junction, the main traffic from the south crossed the Trent by Swarkestone Bridge, about which, as about most ancient bridges, local folk-lore has been busy. Tradition has it that the bridge was built by two maiden sisters, figures of dim antiquity, dressed in the modern garb of rich old spinsters. And when a man snores in his sleep, he is said, in local parlance, to be driving his pigs over Swarkestone Bridge. Higher up the river again, lies Repton, the ancient capital of the Saxon kingdom of Mercia, with little to show of the great abbey and nunnery, coeval with the conversion of the Mercians to Christianity, and its tombs of early Saxon kings; nor even of the Norman priory that was built upon the site. The early nunnery was destroyed by the Danes, and surely it was a descendant of that iconoclastic race who, in the first year of Mary's reign, utterly destroyed the buildings of the priory. "He would destroy the nest for fear the birds should build there again." In the place of the ancient priory, however, we have a well-endowed and flourishing grammar-school, some of the foundations of which seem to have belonged to the ancient religious house.

From Swarkestone Bridge to Derby town is no long march, although perhaps rather a dreary one, through a thinly-populated woldy kind of country. But, reaching the vale of the Derwent (which, below Derby, spreads widely into its sister valley of the

Trent), you see at once how this upland town, lying at the head of wide and abundant pasture-lands, should have become the chief settlement of a pastoral race; for Derby is, undoubtedly, the chief town of the Danelagh; it is the only one of our provincial capitals which bears a distinctly Danish name. The swift descent of the river-bed towards the plain gave water-power to many water-mills. In the time of the Confessor, Derby had fourteen of these—a goodly number in a non-mechanical age—with two hundred and forty-three burgesses, who, with their dependents and servants, formed a main portion of the northern Fyrd, or army, which marched with Earl Edwin to meet the Norwegians and Harold's treacherous brother. Derby, probably, lost half its inhabitants in fighting Tostig, and at fatal Senlac, where they died with their honoured Harold, a man of their own race and blood. Thus at the time of the Domesday record there were only a hundred burgesses left of full age, and only ten corn-mills were grinding grist. At the Conquest, perhaps with the view of strengthening the depleted town, Litchurch, an adjoining hamlet, was added to Derby; a matter of no great consequence at the time, perhaps, but which was destined, some eight hundred years after, to have a considerable influence on the prosperity of the town; for the Midland Railway making its headquarters at Derby, built its stations and offices upon the level ground of Litchurch, to the great economic benefit of the municipality.

Otherwise, the general history of the town is not of an exciting nature. The privileges of the borough were first confirmed by a charter from Henry Beauclerc, and from the reign of Richard the First no Jews were allowed to reside there. With the revival of civic and municipal life in the thirteenth century, Derby got from King John a more comprehensive charter, according the burgesses the same privileges as those of Nottingham. And from that date, Derby, happy in being a plain burgher settlement without any royal castle or exacting overlord, pursued the even tenor of its way without any history to speak of. According to tradition, some time in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries All Saints' Tower was built at the expense of the young men and maids of the town, which, if really a fact, bespeaks a rare amount of pocket-money allotted to the young people of those days. In All Saints' Church lies our old friend

Bess of Hardwick in a fine sculptured tomb with many of the Cavendishes, her descendants, around her; but the body of the church is much more recent, with an appearance suggestive of an old-fashioned London church, the suggestiveness being accounted for when we learn that it was built by the architect of Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields. In the seventeenth century the plague raged terribly in the town, having been brought there from London, it is said, by some Yorkshire clothiers. The country people, in dread of the visitation, refrained from bringing in provisions, and those who escaped the plague were in danger of being starved, till it was arranged that provisions should be exchanged against money without buyers and sellers coming in contact with each other. The exchange was effected upon a stone at the entrance to the town, called the Headless Cross; the country people approaching cautiously with tobacco in their mouths, and carefully fumigating the coin before they dropped it in their pouches. Apropos of the tobacco, it is recorded by the historian of Derby that the plague never touched tobacconist, tanner, or shoemaker.

During centuries of quiet prosperity the martial and royal spirit of the men of Derby had not altogether died out, and when Charles the First set up his standard at Nottingham, about twenty Derby men marched there and entered the royal service. But two centuries later, in the consternation caused by the apparently victorious march of the Young Pretender, seven hundred and fifty men were raised and armed to defend the town, who, however, were withdrawn at the approach of the Highlanders, and do not seem to have fired a shot in earnest.

The peaceful citizens of Derby no doubt felt much relieved when their defenders marched off, and the prospect of a hand-to-hand fight in street and market-place was avoided. But they awaited with a good deal of trepidation the arrival of the Prince Pretender's advance-guard, which appeared at eleven o'clock in the morning in the shape of two troopers, who rode up to The George Inn and demanded billets for nine thousand men. Soon after came thirty more in the same uniform—blue with scarlet waistcoat and gold lace—commanded by Lord Balmerino, and these drew up in the market-place till three o'clock, when Lord Elcho arrived with a hundred and fifty horsemen, the rest of the corps,

being the prince's lifeguard—fine figures and well dressed, but with jaded horses. The body of the army soon followed, marching six or eight abreast—a motley crowd, greybeards and striplings in the ranks together, and all mud-stained and weary-looking. The Jacobite officers levied a contribution of some two thousand five hundred pounds upon the town, and, as the Derby folk had just subscribed a similar sum for the existing powers, the fact is a testimony to the wealth and substance of the town. The prince's men beat up for volunteers, offering five shillings advance, and five guineas payable on reaching London, but only three men joined, and these worthless, dissipated fellows, of whom their new comrades themselves were ashamed.

This pitiful result in the way of recruiting seems to have given the coup de grâce to the last hopes of the prince's party. They had advanced through the half of England supposed to be the most devoted to the cause of the Stuarts, and not one man of note had joined them, and only a few score of tatterdemalion recruits. And yet it seems that preparations were made to march onwards, and the advance-guard reached the Trent at Swarkestone Bridge.

And here, upon this long, many-arched bridge, that stretches over the sunny and silver Trent and far beyond over the low-lying grounds so often covered by winter floods, here the little army of horsemen came to a halt. The way before them to London was clear and fair, with populous villages and towns all along the route. In another week they might have mounted guard at St. James's Palace, while the Tower guns thundered for the coronation of King Edward the Seventh. But the trumpets sounded the recall, and the troop wheeled round to begin the painful and disastrous retreat which ended on Culloden Moor.

With the disappearance of the Jacobites ended the age of adventure and romance. A few years after, in 1750, we hear of the establishment of the porcelain manufactory by the ingenious Mr. Duesbury, and the Derby china soon became noted. In 1777 Dr. Johnson remarked that the china was beautiful but so dear that he could have silver vessels as cheap. Then, in 1780, when the old Chelsea establishment was broken up, the workmen and models were transferred to Derby. Eventually the Derby Pottery became famous for less fragile ware, and dinner-services and dessert-

services, of the well-known Crown Derby mark, are still in use in many old-fashioned families.

But Derby, although it has always kept up its ancient character as a place of mills and machinery, has never assumed that of a thorough-going manufacturing town. The town had silk mills long before Macclesfield, and it is said that a Derby man, one John Lombe, introduced the manufacture from Italy, quite against the will of the Italians, who used the greatest precautions to prevent the secret of their processes from escaping. But Lombe, by bribes to workmen and disguised visits to the silk factories, succeeded in mastering the mystery of the manufacture. He also induced several of the Italian workmen to accompany him to Derby, and aid him in setting up the new silk works. But it is said that Italian vengeance also followed Mr. Lombe in the shape of an Italian woman, supposed to have been an emissary of the enemy, who is thought to have poisoned him. Anyhow, the man died suddenly, and the Italian lady disappeared, leaving no evidence, however, to connect her with the catastrophe.

A more successful industrial pioneer was Jedediah Strutt, born in 1726, near Alfreton, where his father was a farmer and maltster. Jedediah invented or adapted a machine for making ribbed stockings, upon which he rose to fame and fortune. Later on he became a partner with the well-known cotton-spinner, Arkwright, who finding the cotton-spinners of Lancashire too much inclined to burn down the new factories and smash the new machinery, set up his spindles and his throstles in a fine new mill near Derby. Arkwright and Strutt soon rose to commercial eminence, and helped to found the new aristocracy of wealth. A descendant of Jedediah was Joseph Strutt, the antiquary, whose novel of *Queenho Hall* is probably forgotten, but who is still an authority on ancient sports and pastimes. In 1856 a peerage was conferred upon the elder branch of the Strutts, with the title of Barons Belper, and the name of Strutt of Belper is still well-known in connection with the cotton manufactory.

With the increase of wealth and population Derby becomes one of the provincial capitals of literary and scientific culture. And this centres mostly about the courtly, dignified presence of Erasmus Darwin, whose poem, *The Botanic Garden*, is now chiefly remembered for the really remark-

able prophecy it contains of the coming powers of the steam-engine, then only applied to mines and manufactories—a prophecy not yet entirely verified.

Soon shall thy arm, unconquered steam, afar
Drag the slow barge, and drive the rapid car;
Or on wide waving wings expanded bear
The flying chariot through the fields of air.

At Derby, the wise physician ended his days, and one of his last letters describes his pleasant home, The Priory, "with the garden, the ponds full of fish, the deep umbrageous valley, with the talkative stream running down it, and Derby tower in the distance." Here, too, Dr. Darwin founded the Philosophical Society, the model of many similar societies, which have played no inconsiderable part in implanting a love of scientific culture in the pushing, thriving communities of the north of England. The literary circle at Derby had its Reynolds in the native artist, Joseph Wright, the son of a solicitor in the town, whose portraits are highly prized by artists and collectors.

An earlier Derby worthy was John Flamsteed the astronomer, of whom, by the way, the local historian, Hutton, relates that he narrowly escaped the hangman's knot in his youth, having been convicted of highway robbery—probably in some boyish frolic akin to Shakespeare's deer-stealing exploit—but that he received a pardon from Charles the Second, who could hardly be hard upon youthful escapades. The pardon was found among the astronomer's papers at his death, and must rather have astonished his executors, who knew only the grave and serious man of science of later days—divine as well as astronomer, for he held the living of Burstow, Surrey.

Within the compass of a pleasant walk or drive from Derby lies Dale Abbey; a green, ivy-covered arch being almost the only relic of the once proud abbey. A homely tradition connects the foundation of the abbey with an enthusiastic baker of Derby, who left his ovens, one day, driven by an overmastering impulse to seek religious tranquillity in some lonely retreat. Passing a village-green, bewildered by the uncertainty of his quest, he heard a woman in a thrilling voice cry to her children, "Go, drive the cows to Deepdale!" and took the voice as in some way a supernatural indication, and so went to Deepdale, and lived there as a hermit. As time went on the fame of the hermit's sanctity drew other recluses

to the spot, and thus was formed the religious community. In this legend we probably have the origin of an earlier monastery than the later Norman abbey, which has left these scanty remains.

From Derby, road and rail alike follow the pleasant valley of the Derwent. To the left lies Kedleston Hall, the stately home of the Curzons, surrounded by its beautiful park. And Duffield is soon reached, where the name of Castle Orchard suggests the site of a former castle, which is all that is left to recall the memory of the De Ferrars, ancient earls of Derby, a title which has been extinct for ages, for the Stanleys, it may be observed, have nothing to do with Derbyshire, and take their title from the hundred of West Derby in Lancashire. Apropos of this title, by the way, and the correct pronunciation of it, whether my Lord Derby or my Lord Darby, it may be said that all the evidence is in favour of the former. Derby is Dearbi in Anglo-Saxon charters and on Anglo-Saxon coins; it is Derby in Domesday. The exquisites of the latter days of Elizabeth first began to write and pronounce Darbye, but in written documents the ancient and correct way of spelling soon reasserted itself, although the pronunciation has been perpetuated as a tradition of dandyism—or what we should perhaps call La-di-da-ism—to the present day.

As we approach Matlock we may borrow a description that perhaps will awaken a pleasant echo of youthful feelings among those who in early days derived literary nurture from Miss Edgeworth's books.

"Presently they entered a narrow but beautiful valley; a stream ran through it, and there were hills on each side, whose banks were covered to a great height with trees of the softest foliage, and of various shades of green. Above, high above the young feathery plantations, rose bare whitish rocks. Sometimes stretching in perpendicular smooth masses, sometimes broken in abrupt craggy summits, huge fragments of which had fallen into the river below. The river flowed tranquil and placid till, when opposed by these massy fragments, it foamed and frothed against their immovable sides, then separating, the waters whirled round them in different currents, and joining again the stream ran on its course, sparkling in the sunshine. The road now lying beside this river brought them soon to the pretty straggling village of Matlock."

This is from Harry and Lucy. What children read Harry and Lucy now? and yet to many not far advanced beyond middle life their first visit to Matlock will recall Harry with his portable barometer, and the more volatile and lovable Lucy.

There is a great change in the secluded village of other times, secluded still by Nature, but now often thronged like a fair by a host of summer visitants, while every sheltered slope is crowned by some hydropathic establishment. Beyond the regular tourist track lies a wild and dreary district dotted here and there with scattered lead-mines—mines which have been worked without interruption from the days when they paid tribute to Cæsar, and probably from still earlier times.

The ancient laws and customs of the mines are worth a little study, as, handed down from age to age, they bear traces of quite different influences from the feudal and aristocratic systems of the surrounding districts. In Wirksworth, for instance, the laws of the mines declare: "Tis lawful for all liege people of this nation to dig, delve, etc., and turn up all manner of ground, land, meadows, closes, etc., within the said wapentake; dwelling-houses, highways, orchards, and gardens excepted." And the law was no dead letter; any prospecting miner might follow the surface indications of a vein, like a huntsman his hounds, over any man's field or enclosure. And having settled where to dig his shaft, the miner had merely to scoop out a hole, and place there a small wooden cross, and that was in the language of the miners a good possession for him, and the miner was entitled to have two meers measured out to him by the Barmaster, and to work his mine unmolested. The Barmaster, indeed, was the only authority recognised by the miners, all civil processes must pass through his hands, and he alone was authorised to punish crime. Controlling the despotic powers of the Barmaster was the great court or Barrmote held twice a year at Eastertide and Michaelmas.

Two handsome pigs of lead, among others, marked with Roman stamps, are to be found among our native antiquities in the British Museum, which were discovered in the neighbourhood of Wirksworth and Matlock. These Roman pigs—the Derby miners would have called them pieces, two of which go to a pig—vary considerably in weight, and it is a curious fact that till within recent times so did all the pigs of metal sent away from the mines, accord-

ing to the distance of ultimate destination and difficulties of transport thereto. For instance, a piece, or half pig, for London, a long doleful portage on the backs of packhorses, weighed only one hundred and thirty-six pounds, while a piece for Hull, with water-carriage nearly all the way, weighed one hundred and sixty-eight pounds. For the sender paid all charges of conveyance, which he thus deducted from his pigs before he sent them to market. There is something pleasingly archaic in this survival, almost to our own day, of a relic of a time when weights and measures accommodated themselves to human convenience, and had not assumed the rigid fixity of a scientific age; when land was measured by the oxen's yoke and the power of the plough-team; and when the stadium was shorter or longer according to the difficulties of the way.

The mining region of Derbyshire extends to the very summit of the Peak, where William Peverel built his strong tower, and the title of Peverel of the Peak reminds us of Walter Scott's novel. But there have been no Peverels in Derbyshire since the reign of Henry the Second, when the second of the name, the grandson of the Conqueror, was accused of poisoning the popular Ranulph, Earl of Chester—the one whose fame was enshrined in popular ballads along with that of Robin Hood—so that most of his possessions escheated to the Crown, while the small portion that his daughter was allowed to inherit was carried by her marriage to a line of strangers. And the castle of the Peak, although counted one of the seven wonders of the Peak, is only a hill-tower that could never have been of great importance. The other wonders of the Peak are described in Latin verses by no less a philosopher than Hobbes of Malmesbury, who long lived among the Derbyshire hills as the guest and pensioner of the kindly Cavendishes. This little book of the great philosopher must have attained a good deal of popularity, for it reached a fifth edition in 1683, and is accompanied with an English version by a "Person of Quality," commencing:

On th' English Alps, where Darbie's peak doth
rise,
High up in Hills that emulate the Skies,
Doth Chatsworth by swift Derwin's channel stand,
Fam'd for its Pile, and Lord, for both are grand.

The pile thus described, the work of our friend, Bess of Hardwick, has been, however, replaced by one still more grand, abundantly described in many excellent

guide-books. Perhaps the most interesting part of modern Chatsworth is its gardens, with their magnificent conservatories, created almost, from an unsatisfactory chaos, by Sir Joseph Paxton. The late Duke of Devonshire's account of Sir Joseph is interesting. How the duke was looking out for a head-gardener, and visited the Horticultural Gardens at Chiswick, and was struck with the appearance of a young man busy nailing and training creepers—a new hand at eighteen shillings a week wages, "young and untried," so said the prudent curator of the grounds. But the duke determined to try him; and with no munificent salary at first—twenty-five shillings a week—young Paxton began to build up the gardens of Chatsworth. The wealth of the Cavendishes was soon employed in building up the huge conservatories, in sending expeditions even to distant countries for rare and curious plants, while Paxton accompanied the duke in his visits to all the great capitals of Europe, and brought back ideas and information. And then one day Mr. Paxton, travelling up to London, joined the Holyhead mail at Crewe, and travelled up to town with some contractors interested in the much-talked-of building for the coming world's exhibition of 1851. Paxton sketched his notions of a great glass building upon the back of a newspaper, and from this sketch was elaborated the design of the wonderful glass palace in Hyde Park, and the structure that succeeded it at Sydenham.

Not far from Chatsworth, in the tributary valley of the Wye, lies Bakewell, a pleasant little town in the midst of charming scenery, with a fine church rich in monuments, the most ancient of which is one to Thomas de Wednesley, who was mortally wounded in the battle of Shrewsbury, fighting against the Percys; possibly one of those whom Hotspur describes as marching in the king's coats, and who fell before the sword of Douglas.

But the gem of the district is Haddon Hall, one of the finest of the old baronial halls still left to us—a fine quadrangular structure, mostly of the Tudor period, but with parts still more ancient. Here lived the Vernons in their pride, the greatest people in all the district round, but simple knights in the official hierarchy. The last of the Vernons, Sir George, was known as the King of the Peak, and that he sometimes stretched his regal powers a little is shown in the following story. A pedlar had

visited the hall one day, and had gone on his way, taking up his abode for the night in the cottage of a peasant. Nothing more was seen of him, but soon after a terror-stricken rustic came to seek the knight in his justice-room, and told his tale—how he had passed the peasant's cottage by night, and noticing a light in the window and hearing uncanny noises, he had crept up and looked in, and saw the body of the pedlar lying on the ground, and the peasant hacking off the head with his bill. A strict search was instituted, and the remains of the pedlar were discovered in a copse and brought to the hall, where Sir George commanded all his neighbours and servants to attend, and put them to the ordeal of touching the dead body one by one. The suspected man hung back till among the last. According to the popular belief, at the touch of the murderer, the wounds of the murdered man would begin to bleed afresh, and the conscience-stricken peasant, rather than undergo the ordeal, took to his heels and made for the woods. Then followed a chase in which the whole community took part, a hue and cry over fields and through plantations, till the fugitive was hunted down, when by Sir George's order he was hung to the nearest tree. Such rough justice as this, however, was an anachronism even in the reign of Elizabeth, and Sir George was called to account by the council, but seems to have made his peace without any heavy fine or forfeiture.

Between this and Buxton the county gives evidence of an ancient population which has left only the remains of its dead to tell its history. There are barrows and tumuli everywhere; some opened near Chelmaston disclosed circles of skeletons, with their heads turned to the centre. At Arborlow there is a fine stone circle, and the lonely Roman road, with the melancholy summit of Axedge in the background, seems to add to the eerie desolation of the scene. The Roman road leads direct to Buxton, which, time out of mind, has been the great health resort of the district. The ancient rite of the well-dressing, still kept up with the accompaniment of cheap trippers in thousands from every part of the manufacturing districts, carries the mind back to a simple Pagan worship which has left its echoes still in the hearts of simple peasants. And Buxton is, perhaps, the southernmost of the sociable gregarious watering-places of

which the type is not to be found reproduced south of the Trent.

Hathersage is another centre of Derbyshire folk-lore, in itself most interesting, with wild and romantic scenery, and a wealth of prehistoric remains. Here, according to tradition, Little John, the lieutenant of Robin Hood, lies buried, the grave, as marked out by head and foot stones, being at least nine feet long. That tradition has duly pointed out the last resting-place of some mighty man of old is probable enough, and why should we cast any doubt on his identity when popular faith is so strong upon the point?

Leaving the wild and beautiful valleys of the Peak district, we come to a still wild but more populous and manufacturing district that borders upon Sheffield—a region of coal and iron. Dronfield, Chesterfield, and Staveley are thriving industrial towns with no particular history about them, while Beauchief Abbey, that lies near Dronfield, has only a tower to show of its ancient glories. A little village, called Whittington, lying among the moors, contains a dwelling still called Revolution House, where met a trio of conspirators in 1688—Earl Danby, afterwards the Duke of Leeds, the Duke of Devonshire, and Sir John Darcy, son and heir of Conyers, Earl of Holderness—who there, it is said, settled the preliminaries of the landing of William of Orange and the establishment of the Protestant succession. Bolsover, which stands upon the summit of a limestone edge, is more picturesque in its ruin and decay than it ever was in its former magnificence. The house was built on the site of an ancient castle, in 1613, by Sir Charles Cavendish—a barrack, as it were, to hold a vast array of servants and retainers, but ugly and comfortless. A fine riding-house, still kept in repair, testifies to the love of horsemanship and the skill in the manège of these ancient Cavendishes. But the ruins of Bolsover now belong to the Duke of Rutland's estate, having, like Haddon Hall, been added thereto by fortunate marriages at one time or other.

Farther south lies Wingfield, with remains of the old manor-house of the Talbots, where Mary Queen of Scots was resident for some time under the charge of the Earl of Shrewsbury and Countess Bess. Here, as usual, she turned the heads of all the men in the neighbourhood, and Leonard Dacre, who lived close by, was one of the unfortunates who attempted her rescue. Dethicke, too, was close at hand,

and from Wingfield, no doubt, the charming queen threw her invisible net over the chivalrous Anthony Babington. The Babingtons were originally of Nottinghamshire, and the broad lands of Dethicke had been won, with the hand of the heiress, by an ancestor in the fifteenth century. Anno 1586, Anthony Babington was attainted of high treason for his share in the historic conspiracy which bears his name, and his enormous patrimony passing to his brother George, was by him wasted and dissipated.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE OCEANS.

It is well-nigh two hundred and thirty years since Sir Thomas Browne pointed out the "vulgar error" of the Cnidians in giving up the attempt to cut the Isthmus of Corinth. They were deterred, it is related, by the peremptory command of Apollo, who said that if it had been intended that the country should be an island it would have been made so at first. "But this, perhaps," says the learned doctor, "will not be thought a reasonable discouragement unto the activity of those spirits which endeavour to advantage Nature by Art, and upon good grounds to promote any part of the universe; nor will the ill-success of some be made a sufficient determent unto others, who know that many learned men affirm that islands were not from the beginning; that many have been made since by art; that some Isthmes have been cut through by the sea, and others cut by the spade; and, if policie would permit, that of Panama in America were most worthy the attempt, it being but few miles over, and would open a shorter cut unto the East Indies and China." Yet two centuries and a quarter elapsed after this was written before "policie would permit" to attempt what has been the dream of ages.

The first European to cross the Isthmus of Central America was the Spanish adventurer Vasco Nunez de Balboa. This was in 1513, some five or six years before Cortez,

When with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific, and his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

It matters little, however, who was the first, but this we know, that for many years the Spaniards were possessed with the idea of uniting the Atlantic with the Pacific. So infatuated were they, indeed, and so importunate for the aid of Philip

the Second, that he forbade all further reference to it on pain of death. A summary way of disposing of difficult questions, in harmony with the dark days of the Inquisition.

For nearly a century interest in the Darien Isthmus seems to have slumbered, only to be re-awakened by the magnificent scheming of William Paterson. The unhappy story of his attempt at colonising does not need to be retold; but it is worthy of noting now that he selected for his first settlement the very place which has been fixed on in our time to make a way for the waters of the Atlantic.

Within the present century the project has been taken up in turn by England, America, and France. It seemed to be taking definite form when, in 1850, a treaty was concluded between the United States and Great Britain for the political neutrality of a proposed canal.

Once more, however, the matter slept until revived again in 1870 by the conclusion of a treaty between the United States of America and the United States of Columbia with the same object. Still nothing really definite was done towards the work by either country. The French were actually doing more, for, in 1843, the whole line of route was inspected by two French engineers, who prepared an elaborate but impracticable plan. Louis Napoleon, it may here be said, had always a great fancy for the scheme, and when incarcerated in the Castle of Ham he drew up a formal proposal on the subject.

It was not, however, until 1876 that really serious energies were brought to bear on the matter. In that year, Lieutenant Wyse was sent by the French Geographical Society to survey the isthmus, to define a route, prepare a plan, negotiate with the Columbian Government, and to report. All this he did very thoroughly, while M. Ferdinand de Lesseps convoked an International Congress to formulate a scheme. This congress decided that the most practicable route had been demonstrated to be one sketched from the Gulf of Limon, at Colon, to the Bay of Panama.

This brings us to about the middle of 1879, when progress was once more arrested. The preliminary prospectus of the project was received with great disapproval in the United States, and such serious political opposition seemed to be threatened, that M. de Lesseps had to suspend financial operations in order to go over to the States himself. There his

energy and eloquence were not unrewarded, and he returned to Europe to complete his plans.

In November, 1880, was issued the prospectus of the Universal Inter-Oceanic Canal Company, asking for five hundred thousand subscriptions of five hundred francs each.

This prospectus stated that the cost of the canal from Limon to Panama would be five hundred million francs, and that the difference between the capital of the company and the outlay would be raised upon bonds secured upon eighty per cent. of the net profits, with interest at five per cent. during the period of construction. The time estimated for construction was eight years, and the profits were estimated to be eleven per cent. should the shipping annually using the canal amount to six million tons, paying dues at fifteen francs per ton. These estimates, of course, were keenly criticised. It has been repeatedly stated by experts that the final cost of the canal is likely to be nearer forty millions sterling, than twenty millions sterling, as M. de Lesseps calculates, and that the amount of shipping available to use it cannot come up to one-half of his estimate. The chief of the American Bureau of Statistics prepared and published a series of figures to prove that not more than one and a half to two millions of tons of shipping could be expected to use the canal annually, while other authorities estimated the probabilities as between two and three millions of tons. These differences are serious, but as all are only estimates at best, we are not concerned at present to deal with them. M. de Lesseps had faith in his own figures, and his countrymen had faith in him. The capital was subscribed, and the work was commenced early in 1881.

The Americans were not content, however, to leave the piercing of the isthmus in French hands, and, under the auspices of General Grant, was formulated a scheme for cutting a canal farther north through Nicaragua. This scheme fell through then, but has since, we believe, been revived in California, where a company is being formed, or attempted to be formed, for the purpose.

Concurrently, a Captain Eads published a plan for a ship-railway across the Tehuantepec Isthmus, which attracted a good deal of attention for its boldness and novelty. So far the public has not taken up this last project very warmly, but

Captain Eads is said to be actually at work surveying and preparing his route.

Since M. de Lesseps sent out his first cargo of experts and material, we, in this country, have practically lost sight of the matter. We knew that something was going on, but nobody knew exactly what; reports were conflicting, and everybody concluded that it was going to be such a long business at best, that it could well be forgotten for some years. But the recent receipt of a report from Mr. Chamberlaine, the British Consul at Panama, shows us that very material progress is being made, and it will be of interest to indicate briefly what is being done.

The headquarters of the Inter-Oceanic Company have been fixed at Panama, where a large building of two hundred apartments has been purchased at a cost of forty thousand pounds for the accommodation of the engineers and staff of the central administration. Including workmen, the entire staff employed by the company on April 1st last was six thousand four hundred and sixty-nine, and of the labourers the larger proportion were Jamaicans. In the Bay of Panama the company has quite a fleet of steam-launches and boats; on the island of Naos it has a meteorological station for observing and registering the tides, temperature, winds, etc.; and on the Island of Toboga it has established a sanatorium for those of its employes whose health gives way. But the conditions as to health of the large army of workers seems, according to Mr. Chamberlaine, to be better than was generally expected. He reports the cases of illness as 14.30 per cent., and says that of six thousand persons whom he closely watched, eight hundred and fifty fell ill, the mortality being equal to twenty-five per thousand per annum. This is to some extent reassuring, for the mortality during the construction of the Panama railway was frightful, there being a saying of grim significance that an Irishman lies buried under every sleeper. The unhealthiness of the isthmus was one of the greatest of the obstacles suggested in the way of the canal project, but by care or good fortune the obstacle is not proving so formidable as was feared.

The principle upon which the work is being conducted is to divide the line into sections, and to let the work of the separate sections to contractors. Thus the first section, which extends from Rio Grande, near the mouth of the Chagres River, to Pedro Miguel, has been let to the

Franco-American Trading Company, who, however, have not yet commenced work. Their task comprises the excavation of about three million eight hundred and sixteen thousand cubic metres of earth, and they are to complete this section within two years for two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. On the next section from Pedro Miguel to Paraiso, work is progressing rapidly with over four hundred labourers excavating and cutting the bed of the canal. From Paraiso the next section extends to Culebra, which is the highest level the canal will attain, and here a cutting three hundred and fifty feet deep has to be made through the mountain. Here the necessary machinery has already been erected, and some seven hundred men are at work. The contract, which involves the extraction of three million five hundred thousand cubic metres, is for four hundred and fifty thousand pounds. From this point to Emperador forms another section, in which great progress has been made—machinery erected, railroad constructed, and hills levelled. On this section six hundred and forty men are employed, and it is to be completed in three years for seven hundred and fifteen thousand pounds. After this come the sections of the Upper and Lower Obispo, in which the river of that name has to be cut in five different places. The heaviest part of the work in these sections is the construction of a railway to carry the earth and stone excavated to Gamboa, with which to build a dam between the Cerro Cruz and the Cerro Obispo. This will form a reservoir two thousand six hundred feet long, and one hundred feet high, capable of holding six hundred and sixty millions of cubic metres of water. The work on this section is so far advanced that the railway will soon be completed, and then the building of the reservoir will commence. The next section to Gorgona is being also actively prosecuted, and a connection has been formed between the line of the Panama railway and the works. At this stage the canal will cut the Chagres river five times. In the next section, extending to Matachin, some five hundred and eighty labourers are employed in cutting the bed of the canal, and blowing up roots and trunks of large trees with dynamite. After this, in the two sections of San Pablo and Bohio Solado, the canal cuts the Chagres river fifteen times again, and here work has only been in progress a few months, but already six hundred men are

employed preparing the way for the engineers to begin their levelling and scientific work in the dry season.

At Bohio Solado the most difficult part of the operations is passed, and two-thirds of the entire length of the canal. The remainder of the course to Colon—the Atlantic outlet—will be comparatively easy, consisting mainly of dredging on soft marshy soil. The headquarters at this end are at Gatun, and from there are directed the operations of three dredges, each capable of raising five thousand cubic metres per day.

At Colon, Mr. Chamberlaine says, a remarkable change has been wrought. Two years ago it was an insignificant town of three thousand inhabitants, with no accommodation for travellers. To-day it has over ten thousand inhabitants, and numerous hotels and places of entertainment. It has become a bustling place with large imports and a constant traffic. Here the company has erected a wharf at which vessels may discharge the stores and material for the works, and has reclaimed twenty acres of ground, and erected on them a platform and mole. On the platform, which is where will be the Atlantic entrance to the canal, have been built substantial warehouses, workshops, and residences for the officials. The mole and the platform form a breakwater for the shelter of vessels intending to enter the canal. A slipway has been constructed for the building and repairing of small craft. At the present time the company has two thousand eight hundred men employed at Colon, and its imports of material average about ten thousand tons per month.

From the foregoing rapid sketch it will be seen that Sir Thomas Browne's "few miles over" are long and wearisome, measured by the amount of labour, and skill, and money required to traverse them. Whether the canal will or will not be completed within eight years from its commencement, and whether or not the cost will exceed M. de Lesseps's and approach the English estimate, are questions for the future to decide. Meanwhile the maritime commerce of the world is constantly growing, and it would be rash to say that it will not grow up to the accommodation of the Panama Canal, as it has already surpassed that of the Suez Canal. To the political questions involved in the project we need not further refer than to say they are capable of solution.

As we see difficulties smoothed down and obstacles fall away before the indomitable energy of M. de Lesseps, and as we read the independent testimony of our countryman to the work which has been and is being done, we begin to feel ourselves within reach of the realisation of the dream of ages. One of the most magnificent schemes of our century is on the road to completion, and even old men may live to witness the imposing nuptials of the two great oceans of the world.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXXVI. AT LAST.

SIX weeks or so before the expiration of the probationary term, there fell another heavy trial upon poor Jenifer in the dangerous illness of her husband.

The grand ambition of his life had been to be rich—not for the sake of riches—not that he might be quoted as a wealthy man, or one to whom the "spending of a thousand up or down" was a mere nothing, but for the sake of procuring the sport, the pleasures, the luxuries, the excitements without which life seemed to him to be not worth living.

He had missed his own money-making mark early in life, when, instead of going into practice with his father, he had insisted on going into the army. He had (before the Effie days even) missed marrying an heiress who cruelly jilted him, and openly denounced him as a fortune-hunter. And his last stroke for Fortune's smiles, Jenifer and her probabilities of success, had turned out a fatally false one. The hopes he had built upon her success were bitter as Dead Sea fruits.

As soon as he was out of the sunshine of social life, that sunshine which can only be the permanent portion of those whose purses are always well filled, he grew gloomy, indifferent to his few remaining sources of enjoyment, bitter and distrustful of everyone, and sourly discontented.

The work of his clerkship was uncongenial to him. The business men by whom he found himself surrounded in his business life were uncongenial to him, yet he shrank from the society of his old friends, and took it for granted that they despised him on account of his position as heartily as he despised it.

With Whittler's death he gave up all hopes of ever being able to make Jenifer

into a money-making machine. And so his home-life had no happiness in it, for he always regarded his wife as one who had tricked and defrauded him by appearing to have remunerative talent when she had it not.

The result was that the disturbed, dissatisfied, lowered tone of his mind acted in time upon his body, and when a heavy cold assailed him, and feverish symptoms speedily set in, he had neither the strength nor the spirit to do battle against them.

They had left the furnished house in St. John's Wood now, and were in lodgings in a dismal crescent in the neighbourhood, where his strained nerves were tortured by barrel-organs by day, and the cries of every evil-dispositioned cat in the neighbourhood by night. The sun rarely shines in this favoured spot, and the odours that reach it from the adjoining canal are not those best in the world adapted to reinvigorate and refresh an ailing man with fastidious senses and tastes. However, here he had to live, poor fellow; and here, finally, after weeks of anxious, patient, hopeless nursing on Jenifer's part, he had to die.

Then his "own people," those who in their selfish prosperity had nearly forgotten him in his adversity, came, and almost reproached Jenifer with "not having managed better" than to let him get into such a state of health. His mother took comfort in the thought that the "boy was exactly like poor Harry, not a trace of the Rays in him," and then soothed her conscience for the neglect of her son when living, by offering to pay his funeral expenses.

"My advice to you, my dear," she said to Jenifer, as she dried her eyes in a cambric handkerchief, the price of which would have given "the boy" clothes for twelve months; "my advice to you, my dear, is to leave London, and go away to some small country town, where rent is cheap, and you can get singing-pupils. You really needn't waste your time any more by looking after your boy. Your mamma can have literally nothing to do but look after him, and it's clearly her duty to do it."

"His grandmother will not neglect her duty to my boy," Jenifer said.

"Very right, very right of her, indeed," the other grandmother said approvingly. "Now listen to me, Jenifer; you must not let this sad blow ruin your life, you must rise up and exert yourself. Why, if Dr. Edgcomb were taken to-morrow I should

not give way! I should still think it my duty to fulfil the social obligations Heaven has laid upon me; and you must do the same. You must go away into some quiet place, and make up your mind to work! By-and-by we will see what can be done for the dear boy. Of course he will have whatever your mamma has, when she dies."

"Ah, don't speak of my mother's death!" Jenifer cried out, shrinking away from her mother-in-law in a way that astonished that lady.

"My dear, it must come! We all know it must come," Mrs. Edgcomb said authoritatively.

The news of Captain Edgcomb's death reached Moor Royal at a most inopportune moment. Effie had just achieved her principal object of the moment, which was to receive an invitation to a ball at Admiralty House, Plymouth, to meet royalty. No such blissful opportunity might ever come again. In justice to herself she could not neglect it now. So she put Jenifer's telegram into the fire, and drove into Truro to order her dress.

Tidings of Captain Edgcomb's illness had reached Moor Royal before this, but they had not been of an alarming nature, and Effie trusted to chance keeping Hubert in the dark as to his brother-in-law's death until after the ball. Then she meant to call her best tact to her aid, tell him the sad news, and justify her temporary concealment of it by the success she had made at Admiralty House.

Jack had received a similar telegram, but as Hubert and Jack were not on speaking terms, no notification of the event reached Moor Royal from the Home Farm.

So no note of brotherly loving-kindness reached Jenifer from that brother Hubert who had once been her beau-ideal, her type of manly excellence, kindness, and courage.

Effie's dress was as lovely a thing as white satin, delicate gold thread, hand-embroidery, Mechlin lace, and the most perfect cut could make it. And Effie had all the success she desired, and far more than she deserved, at the ball.

But towards the end of it a great blow was dealt her. A man who had been in the same regiment with Captain Edgcomb at Exeter, desirous of being seen to be on speaking terms with the most attractive and most highly distinguished woman in

the room, came and spoke to her when she happened to be going to dance with her husband.

"This is very sad about poor Edgecumb, isn't it?" he said after a moment or two; and before she could answer he went on: "I hardly expected to see you here to-night."

"Why, what's sad?" Hubert asked quickly.

"You don't mean to say that you don't know he's dead?" the other man said, in tones of such evident surprise and distrust, that Hubert, after one glance at his wife's face, thought he had better take her away at once.

"I shall go to my sister to-morrow. The shock has been too great for her to think of anything," he said to Captain Edgecumb's old comrade. But when he was alone with his wife he said:

"You knew, Effie?"

"I couldn't give up the ball. I meant to tell you to-night," she stammered.

"You have made me appear a greater brute than I am in reality to my own sister," he sighed.

And that was his only reproof to Effie. The thought of the sensation she had made at the ball made her bear the reproof heroically.

Some way or other, when the morrow came, Hubert shrank from going to his sister. Poor Edgecumb had been dead several days now, and was probably buried by this time, and as Jenifer would have taken it for granted that they were away from home when her telegram arrived, and had never received it, there would be a certain painful awkwardness in explaining matters. Moreover, he really was not in circumstances just now to do anything for his sister and her boy. And if she was left in poverty, the sight of her would only wring his heart for nothing. So he did not go, and Effie was ashamed to write.

One Monday morning, about six weeks after Captain Edgecumb's death, Jenifer carried her little son into her mother's bedroom earlier than usual, and in answer to an enquiring look from Mrs. Ray, said:

"I am going out for the whole day, dear, and I want you to take care of Jack. Directly the post comes in I shall go off on my round, and try to beat up my former pupils, and get some new ones."

"You are not strong enough to teach yet, my child," Mrs. Ray protested.

"Not strong enough!" Jenifer reared

her slender, straight figure up more erectly. "Mother, where do you see signs of weakness in me?" she asked, laughing.

"None in body——"

"And none in mind either, I hope?"

"No; but your nerves haven't got over the shock," Mrs. Ray argued pityingly.

"Indeed they have, a look at Jack always steadies them," Jenifer said buoyantly. "I'm going to start early," she went on, "because I shall recommence my teaching career by walking, and saving omnibus fares. By-and-by, when I've made the long dreamt of competence, I'll cab it."

"There's the postman's knock; but as usual, I suppose, no letters for us," Mrs. Ray said with a little sigh.

And, indeed, it must be confessed that Mrs. Ray's sons apparently forgot that they had a mother, when they were absent from her.

But this day it happened that there was a letter for her, from Mr. Boldero.

"The time has arrived for the opening and reading of your late husband's latest will," he wrote. "The day fixed is next Thursday, the place in which it is to be read is the library at Moor Royal. All the family, Admiral Tullamore, and myself are to be present. I hope Mrs. Edgecumb and you will do me the honour to be my guests, instead of going to Moor Royal."

"Of course we must go; but, oh dear! what a trial it will be, to go and have just a glimpse of my old home, and see that I'm not wanted there," Mrs. Ray said, wiping away a few tears.

But Jenifer made her mother busy herself about Jack, and so cheered her.

The momentous day arrived. All the family, even Jack Ray and Minnie, were assembled in the library. Effie, arrayed in a sumptuous tea-gown of silver-gray plush, which she wore as a graceful compliment to the memory of Captain Edgecumb, and an air of gay indifference, lounged in one of the new peacock-blue velvet chairs which had succeeded the stately old library ones of golden-brown stamped leather and oak. Mrs. Ray sat regarding the changed aspect of everything with wistful eyes.

And Jenifer could hardly conceal her annoyance and contempt for Hubert, for the cool indifference he displayed towards his mother.

Then their father's latest will was read, and the aspect of all things underwent a sudden change.

Cleared of all legal veiling, it was to this clear effect :

Moor Royal, at the expiration of three years, was to remain Hubert's property on unchanged terms if, during those three years, he had shown real filial feeling and true manly consideration for his mother, charged merely with the payment of two hundred a year more to Mrs. Ray, which two hundred, together with what had been left to the widow under the former will, was to be settled on Jenifer at her mother's death.

But supposing Hubert had developed the "latent selfishness and extravagance" which his father had always detected in him, the property was to go, on the same conditions, to "my second son, John Ray. Provided, that is, that in all respects since my death, he has proved himself worthy to be trusted and has not married beneath him—a taste for low company being, I fear, his besetting sin." In the latter event the whole property was to be Mrs. Ray's, on condition that she left it to Jenifer.

No one could assume for an instant that any of the conditions had been fulfilled, and Hubert and Jack had the grace to accept their just reward in silence. But Effie, loudly protesting against the "disgusting injustice of the whole of the revolting family into which she had married," swept out of the room without a word to the lady who was now its mistress.

Then Hubert went up and kissed his mother, and whispered :

"I deserve it, dear. 'I have sinned before Heaven, and against thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son.'" And all her heart bled for him, and went out to him, and urged her to give him back Moor Royal on the spot.

But this the two executors would by no means allow. So in an hour or two Effie ordered Hubert off with her to join Flora, whose wit and wealth would surely, she thought, upset this iniquitous plot against her peace and plenty.

But when they were gone, Mr. Boldero went to Jenifer, and said :

"Now, you know why I have restrained myself?"

"I think I do; it was because you would not ask me to be your wife till I knew as well as you did that I should be a rich woman?"

"You are right, Jenny dear."

"But you will ask me—one day?" she said, blushing a little, as she held her hand out to him—and remembered her recent bereavement.

"Please God I will," he said frankly.

At the end of a year he kept his promise. And when they were married, he said to her :

"Jenny, can you trust me to be a father to your boy, and a son to your mother?"

"Entirely."

"Then ask her to give back Moor Royal to Hubert. You will be a rich woman without it, my darling, and your mother will be happier with us than alone up there with thoughts of the son who has been punished for his faults to her. Even I can trust Hubert now."

So this latest programme was carried out. And there are no two happier women in England than Mrs. Ray and Jenifer; though Effie holds her fair head up scornfully when they are spoken of, and says :

"It's so unpleasant for me, you know, to have to visit a country lawyer and his wife. Jenifer ought to have known better than to put me in such a position, but she always was so selfish! Flora and I hate selfishness, and visiting any but county people."

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